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THE

Royal DREAM,

OR, THE

Forester's Garland.



T E W K E S B U R Y:

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THE
ROYAL DREAM, &c.



AS I in my closet was reading alone,
I reach'd down a volume which treated of one
A great Emperor formerly reigning at Rome,
Who had but one daughter, so hard was his doom,

Now if you have patience are willing to wait,
A wonderful story of him I'll relate ;
How he an infant endeavour'd to kill,
And how he was hinder'd by providence still.

The Emperor hunting a long summer's day,
At length the dark night chas'd bright Phœbus away
When losing his nobles of honour and fame,
He strait to the house of a forester came.

And craved a lodging, declaring that he,
A gentleman was of a 'quire's degree ;
Who had all the rest of his company lost,
As over the midst of the forest he cross'd.

I'll grant thee a lodging, the forester cry'd,
And likewise a supper he strait did provide,
Of the very best the house could afford,
Yet knew not this was his sovereign lord.

When supper was ended he shew'd his new guest,
A wholesome plain lodging for taking his rest ;
While there he was sleeping the forester's wife,
Brought forth a young infant the joy of her life,

But here is a wonder ; the monarch it seems,
That night was afflicted with terrible dreams,
The error of which I in brief shall declare,
It was the forester's young son and heir.

He dreamt that under the roof there was born,
A child whom the fates had agreed to adorn,
His throne in full power after his decease,
The thoughts of his dream much disturb'd his peace.

At length he arose from his royal repose,
And so to the lodge of his forester goes,
And said, honest fellow, come tell out right,
Has any young infant been born here this night.

Yes, yes, worthy master, the forester said,
My own loving wife of a son has been laid,
And this very night. The Emperor smil'd,
And cry'd I am willing to see thy sweet child.

He had his request, and he view'd every part,
With love in his visage, but spleen in his heart,
For on the child's forehead a coronet grew,
Which made him imagine his dream would be true.

If policy did not prevent his decree,
As he very much wonder'd which way it might be,
The blood thirsty Emperor thought of a way,
The life of the innocent child to betray.

The Emperor cry'd, dost thou know honest friend,
With whom thou art talking from whom I descend?
No, no, worthy master, the forester cries,
I never beheld you before with my eyes.

Why I am your Emperor that you did feast,
The forester trembled, and fear'd at the least
That he should be punish'd for what he had said,
Therefore on his knees for a pardon he pray'd.

Thou hast not offended, but pleased me,
And as a reward for thy kindness, said he,
A place in my palace I mean to provide,
For thy little son, and I will be his guide.

The poor man reply'd, my dear sovereign lord,
Methinks you have proffer'd too great a reward,
In taking such care of a forester's son,
Yet nevertheless your will shall be done.

Then taking his leave he declar'd he would send,
To them for the child by the hands of a friend;

The father and mother were both reconcil'd,
In hopes it might be for the good of the child.

A little time after three whom he could trust,
He call'd to his chamber, and told them they must
Obey his commands, or they surely should die,
They answer'd, my lord we will surely comply.

He told them the tragical story at large,
And on his authority gave them this charge,
To fetch the young infant, and bring him away,
To some silent grove, where the same they might slay.

Said he, pray be careful in acting your part,
Dispose of the carcase and bring me the heart,
They promised obedience in every case,
Then posted away to the forester's place.

Now when they the Emperor's message had told,
Two sorrowful parents you there might behold,
The father he wept, and the mother likewise,
Both bathed the infant with watery eyes.

The messengers cry'd, 'tis a folly to stand,
We came from the court by a special command,
Which you through obedience are bound to obey,
Then give us the child without longer delay,

The sorrowful mother she trembling stands,
Which as she delivered it into their hands,
Take care of my infant she often did say,
And see that it comes to no harm by the way.

They promis'd her fair, and departed with speed,
She little imagin'd her babe was to bleed,
To death by the Emperor's cruel express,
So therefore her sorrow was so much the less.

They travell'd on in the heat of the day,
And came to the forest where they were to slay
The infant, but strait there arose a dispute,
For two of the three were unwilling to do't.

The man that was cruel did make this reply,
If it be not done we shall certainly die,
The Emperor strictly enjoined the death,
Therefore I'm resolved to finish his breath.

Remember the tears of the mother, said one,
Remember her sighs, and her sorrowful moan :
Remember the promise that to her was made,
And let not our hands on the infant be laid.

The third he reply'd, if his life you'll not take,
What proper excuse I pray shall we make,
Some heart we must bear to our sovereign lord,
Or death without mercy will be our reward.

The others reply'd we have found out a way,
A fawn of the forest we'll presently slay,
Whose heart well convey to the Emperor's hand,
Declaring that we have obey'd his command.

The child here we'll leave in the forest the while,
Kind fortune perhaps may afford it one smile ;
By saving his life by some means unknown,
This said, in a bower they left it alone.

They manag'd their matters in every thing,
And unto the Emperor strait they did bring
A heart, which he flung in the fire it seems,
And laugh'd to think on the folly of dreams.

Not far from that place there lived a knight,
Whose lady was beautiful charming, and bright ;
Yet nevertheless they no issue could raise,
As being not bless'd with a child in their days.

By chance in the forest he hunted that day,
And found the sweet infant where smiling it lay ;
He kiss'd it, and bless'd it, a thousand times o'er,
Then home to his lady this infant he bore.

Said he in the forest this blessing I found,
With bushes and briars encompass'd round ;
It pitied me, lady, to find it alone,
We'll keep it, and love it, and call it our own.

He order'd his beautiful lady to feign,
Herself in strong labour, in sorrow and pain,
That so to the world they might freely declare,
This darling to be their own son and heir.

She freely consented to all his request,
And kept close her chamber, inviting no guest ;

At length thro' the region these glad tidings run,
 That such a brave knight was bless'd with a son,
 He grew, and was beautiful, proper, and tall,
 And gained the love, and favour of all;
 That ever beheld him, both courtier and stranger,
 Yet fifteen years after his life was in danger,

For then did the emperor make a decree,
 That lords knights, and gentlemen, feasted should be
 In his royal palace, and at his own board,
 With all sorts of dainties the realm could afford,

To this royal banquet repaired the knight,
 And brought the young squire his joy and delight;
 Who had at that time the Emperor him see,
 That mark in his forehead as plain as might be.

O then to the knight the great Emperor cry'd,
 That is not thy son, I am well satisfy'd,
 So on thy allegiance now tell me the truth,
 That mark I have seen in the first of his youth.

Then finding there was no excuse to be made,
 Unto his great Emperor mildly he said,
 I found him one day in the forest alone,
 And kept him because I have none of my own.

The Emperor called his servants likewise,
 Who came to his presence with watery eyes,
 Declaring what has been rehearsed before,
 And then on their knees did for mercy implore,

He pardon'd his servants their fault they did own,
 Then said to the knight you must leave me your son;
 For I will maintain him both gallant and gay,
 It was but a folly to answer him nay.

He left him but 'twas with a sorrowful heart,
 The feast being ended, they all did depart,
 But still in the Emperor's breast did remain,
 A firm resolution that he should be slain.

The Empress and her daughter of state,
 They kept a rich palace both glorious and great,
 Some hundreds of miles from the city of Rome,
 Where he was to meet his sad tragical doom.

A letter soon after the Emperor writ,
 And to the young squire the same did commit;
 To carry with speed without any delay,
 Said he, My great Lord I am free to obey.

The innocent squire he rid day and night,
 At length being weary he chanc'd to alight,
 And rest in the castle of a noble peer,
 Who bid him right welcome and made good cheer.

The letter by chance he let drop in the room,
 So while he was sleeping the earl did presume
 To open the seals with abundance of care,
 Which reading he found a sad tragedy there.

The words they were these: Take the bearer I say,
 And put him to death without farther delay;
 It is my command, therefore let it be done,
 The blood from his heart like a fountain must run.

Thus having read it, he did bitterly weep,
 And said, Noble squire, thou liest in a sleep,
 What I am reading's thy tragical woe,
 But still I'll endeavour it may not be so.

These words he eras'd, and writ in the place,
 The bearer I'd have you respect and embrace,
 With all the affection of honour and state,
 And give him our daughter to be his sweet mate.

With all expedition pray make her his wife,
 And love him as dear as you would your own life,
 Or else you the force of my fury shall feel,
 So having wrote this he clos'd up the seal.

Next morning the squire rode up to the court,
 And came to the Empress as they do report:
 And gave her the letter which when she had read,
 She made preparations her daughter to wed.

Soon after the Emperor he did prepare,
 With royal attendants to visit her there,
 And as he a letter before him had sent,
 To meet him in triumph the Empress went.

With her royal daughter and new marry'd son,
 The nobles they rid and the commons they run,

All filled with transports of joy and delight,
But Oh! when the son appeared in fight.

The Emperor flew in a passion, and said,
O what is the reason I am not obey'd,
My letter declared that he should be slain,
But still to my grief he alive doth remain.

Sure you are mistaken, the Empress cry'd,
You said that our daughter was to be his bride,
Look here is the letter writ with your own hand,
He having receiv'd it, was much at a stand.

At last he broke silence, and said I bless God,
Tho' twice I have strove to shed innocent blood,
Yet I by God's providence still am debar'd,
I am disappointed, and he is preserv'd,

'Twas heaven's decree that it should not be done,
So welcome my daughter, and welcome my son,
And welcome my honoured Empress too,
My dream in the forest I find to be true.

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F I N I S.

